

# Every Child Learning Every Day



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An early childhood newsletter from the State Department of Education

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## READY TO LEARN

### Take a trip with Miss Rumphius

Idaho teachers have shared some of their favorite books and activities for children as part of Superintendent of Public Instruction Marilyn Howard's "Dinner and a Book" initiative.

This month's submission is from G. Knight, a second grade teacher in Wendell.

**Book:** "Miss Rumphius," by Barbara Cooney.

**Synopsis of story:** Miss Rumphius travels the world and returns to live by the sea. She promised her father she would do something to make the world more beautiful.

**Activity:** Plan a family activity for making your own small part of the world more beautiful, such as trash pick-up, recycling center, tree/flower planting. Do this activity as a community service.

To learn more about Superintendent of Public Instruction Marilyn Howard's Dinner and a Book or to submit your favorite Dinner and a Book recipe visit: [www.sde.state.id.us/DinnerandaBook/](http://www.sde.state.id.us/DinnerandaBook/)



## Making the most of the early years

### Dear Reader:

Twice during the past school year, the State Department of Education staff has collaborated on multi-disciplinary lessons intended to engage all children in a classroom while challenging all of their skills and knowledge.

Some children like to read. Some like to do math problems. Some have active imaginations; others want to know the "why" behind what they learn.

The multi-disciplinary lessons allow every child to participate. Every child brings something to the project.

In a way, this monthly newsletter does much the same thing by offering a broad range of easy-to-do ideas and projects so that every parent will find something here for every child.

The key words here are "parent" and "child." To say that every parent is a child's first and best teacher



**Dr. Marilyn Howard**  
Superintendent of Public Instruction

is more than a cliché: it's a practical statement of the enormous impact parents have on children's early learning.

All of the things we do almost intuitively for children — talking to them, echoing their baby words, singing to them, telling them rhymes, teaching all of those familiar childhood songs — are important first lessons. Those lessons help children build rich vocabularies, which in turn form a strong foundation for building reading skills.

We talk about those early years as a time for play, but for youngsters, playing is another way of learning.

As we understand more about how our brains develop, it's obvious that the first years of a child's life are critical to later success in school. We count on parents to make the most of this time.

*Marilyn Howard*

## READY TO LEARN

### Water games reinforce literacy skills

July is a great time to get wet. Below are suggestions from "The Big Book of Monthly Ideas," The Education Center, Inc. that are fun and educational:

#### A Wet Letter Day

Have a "Wet Letter Day" and accomplish a little cleaning in the process! Explain that things in the room need to be cleaned. Select a letter of the alphabet, such as T, or any other letter.

Help the children gather a collection of items that begin with that letter that can be put into water. For example, a towel, a T-shirt, a plastic letter T, a truck, a plastic tiger, etc.

Ask each child to place his or her choice in a partially filled water table. As the children play with the objects, encourage them to sound out the names of the



items in the water, paying particular attention to the beginning sound of each.

#### Slime

#### Time Rhyme Time

Help the children get some "ooey-gooley" rhyming practice with this activity.

Divide the children into pairs. Have each pair mix 1 cup water, 2 cups of cornstarch, and a small amount of green washable paint in a plastic container until a soupy slime is made.

Then ask each pair to name a body part.

Challenge and help each partner to say or create a corresponding rhyming word; then invite each child to rub a bit of slime on the named body part.

Repeat so each partner gets a turn naming a body part and then a rhyming word.

After the children are all slimed out or rhymed out, wash off the slime.

#### Wet Side Stories

Below are some "squishy" titles to enjoy.

"Better Not Get Wet, Jesse Bear" by Nancy White Carlstrom published by Simon and Schuster

"Splash!" by Ann Jonas published by Greenwillow Books

"No More Water in the Tub!" by Tedd Arnold published by Dial Books for Young Readers

"Joe's Pool," by Claire Henley published by Hyperion Books for Children.

## RESOURCES

### Fireworks pose dangers for children

To help consumers use fireworks more safely, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission offers these recommendations:

**\*\*Do not allow young children to play with fireworks under any circumstances.** Sparklers, considered by many the ideal "safe" firework for the young, burn at very high temperatures and can easily ignite clothing. Children cannot understand the danger involved and cannot act appropriately in case of emergency.

**\*\*Older children should only be permitted to use fireworks under close adult supervision.** Do not allow any running or horseplay.

**\*\*Light fireworks outdoors in a clear area away from houses, dry leaves or grass and flammable materials.**

**\*\*Keep a bucket of water nearby for emergencies and for pouring on fireworks that don't go off.**

**\*\*Do not try to relight or handle malfunctioning fireworks.** Douse and soak them with water and throw them away.

**\*\*Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks.**

**\*\*Never ignite fireworks in a container, especially a glass or metal container.**

**\*\*Keep unused fireworks away from firing areas.**

**\*\*Store fireworks in a dry, cool place.** Check instructions for special storage directions.

**\*\*Observe local laws.**

**\*\*Never have any portion of your body directly over a firework while lighting.**

**\*\*Don't experiment with homemade fireworks.**

#### Fireworks facts

32% of the injuries were caused by firecrackers

15% of the injuries were caused by sky rockets

10% of the injuries were caused by sparklers

7% of the injuries were caused by fountains

Illegal explosives account for a third of all fireworks injuries.

## NUTRITION

### Table talk fosters communication skills

Almost everyone, from the young toddler to the older adult, enjoys talking and having others listen. Few activities in life are more important than communicating.

Effective communication is the basis for developing healthy and mutually rewarding child-to-child relationships and child-to-adult relationships. You can make mealtimes more special by encouraging a climate that fosters communication.



Think of mealtime as a communication time, a time when you can converse with, nurture, and obtain feedback from children. Remove the distractions of projects, unfinished activities, and the television from the eating area. Children need adults to eat with them. When adults eat with children they can:

\*serve as role models by their food choices,

\*protect children from safety hazards, such as cross-contamination and choking hazards, and

\*encourage conversation at mealtimes.

**Toddlers (12 to 36 months) communicate**

Toddlers communicate with a

combination of grunts, gestures, single and multiple-word sentences. Toddlers use movements and actions that are easiest or most familiar to communicate. They may point at food they want and knock food away that they do not want. The parent and caregiver can understand the toddler's communication with time and patience.

**Preschoolers (3-6 years) communicate**

Preschoolers begin to talk in sentences that are grammatically correct even though the sequence may be incorrect. They like to talk about past experiences and may pretend to have imaginary experiences or friends.

### Cups, water make for fun mathematics lessons

Your home is full of opportunities to explore math with your child and, at the same time, build his or her self-confidence and understanding of mathematical ideas.

Math.com features many activities for parents and adults to build young children's math skills. Try this activity: "Fill It Up"

**What you'll need:** A measuring cup, four glasses of equal size, and water.

**What to do:** Pour water at different levels (1/3 cup, 1/2 cup, 3/4 cup and 1 cup) in each glass. Put the glasses next to each other.

Ask your child questions to encourage comparison, estimation, and thinking about measurement.



Which glass has more water? Which has less? How many glasses of water do you estimate it will take to fill the container?

Pour more water into one of the glasses to make it equal to the amount of water in another glass. Move the glasses around so that the glasses that have the same amount of water are not next to each other. Ask your child: Which glasses do you think have the same amount of water?

As your child begins to understand more, do activities using different-shaped containers that hold the same amount of a substance (water, rice, and popcorn kernels). This helps your child see comparisons, as well as the various capacities of different-sized and -shaped containers.

## ACTIVITIES

### Tips for teaching young children caution with firearms

Whether you are a gun enthusiast or believe guns should be banned, it is important to teach children about firearms safety. Safer Child Inc. offers these tips for parents on its website [www.saferchild.org](http://www.saferchild.org):

**Always lock your firearms when they are not being used.**

Lock ammunition in a safe place away from firearms. At an age-appropriate time, show your children a gun, and explain what it can do. You do not have to teach that the gun is "bad," only that it is a tool that can be dangerous in the wrong hands.

Do not assume that your child will not find your gun, will not be able to fire your gun, will not know how to make it work, or will remember the lessons

you have taught. Very small children have fired guns accidentally.

**Always assume that your firearm is loaded -- and handle it that way --** even if you are absolutely certain you have emptied all the bullets. Many people have been killed by a bullet accidentally left in the chamber.

**Use a good locking device** that is appropriate for the children living in your house. Do not depend on it as a sole safety measure.

**Never ever point a firearm at anyone in fun.** Always point your firearm in a safe direction. Remember that a wall is not a safe direction. A distant tree in a public woods is not a safe direction. An animal that you can't clearly identify is not a safe direction.

**Teach your children that if they see a gun, they should not**

**touch it, and they should immediately leave the area to go tell an adult.** Teach them that guns are not toys, and that if a friend wants to show them a gun, they should leave the area and tell an adult. Impress on your child that this is not tattling -- this could easily save the friend's life or your child's own life. Do not avoid teaching these important lessons to your child or pretend that guns do not exist.

**Do not assume that other adults think the same way you do.** Before letting your child play at someone's house, ask if there are firearms in the home and where they are. It's a difficult question to ask -- particularly of people you barely know -- but asking this question could save your child's life.